

# Community Team Meeting

A relatively new type of meeting, the community team meeting is gaining in popularity as builders see benefits accrue. When you mention this concept to field staff their immediate (and often defensive) response is “Oh, we talk off and on all day.”

These random calls or visits that occur daily between sales and construction address questions and concerns raised by home buyers on an equally random basis. While urgent questions should be discussed by the on-site team as they arise, routine (usually weekly) community team meetings provide for comprehensive review of *every* customer’s status and allows for orderly operations. Home buyers quickly discover that issues they discuss with one team member are conveyed to the others. This increases the buyer’s confidence in the team and discourages that occasional dishonest customer from attempting to play team members off against each other.

## ***Simple, Efficient System***

The sales person and the superintendent meet and review each buyer’s file. This is a time to share new information (“The Thompson’s’ mortgage has been approved”), provide updates on recent contacts with the buyer (“Mrs. Harrington is worried about the dying tree on her home site. Do we have any plans of removing it?”), or confirm new change orders (Mr. Smith wants to go ahead with the fireplace. He’ll be out today to sign the change order and give us a check.”) Target delivery dates should be reviewed.

## ***Regular Home Buyer Updates***

If a customer has had no contact with their sales person or superintendent over the preceding week, an update can be planned. Depending on the circumstances, sales may put in a call or send an email or fax. Sometimes contact from the superintendent might be more appropriate. Although such updates need not take a lot of time, they can forestall many a crisis and are especially appreciated by out of town home buyers.

## ***Expert Issue Resolution***

If issues arise that require input from other company personnel these are likewise divided between the sales person (“I’m meeting with the loan officer to see if we can rescue the Jones deal.”) or superintendent (“This change order price seems out of line; I’ll check with purchasing about it.”) for resolution. By noting on the agenda who is working on which issues, the topic can easily be re-visited at the next meeting. This keeps the details under control.

## ***Community Details***

The condition of inventory homes, model maintenance needs, landscaping and common area details, as well as job-site conditions and trade contractor relations might also be part of this routine review. Weekly on-site meetings address are an excellent time for construction to advise sales about changes in methods or materials.

## ***Y’all Come***

Although warranty staffing levels may not permit weekly attendance, the warranty rep for the community should sit in on this meeting at least once a month. Design, mortgage, or closing personnel might sit in on some of them as well. A predictable and reliable opportunity for all parties to discuss community issues can prevent details from getting lost. A standard agenda brings consistency to this procedure company wide and from week to week within each community.

## ***History Teaches***

As an additional benefit, these agendas and the weekly notes that accumulate create a detailed history of the community and this issues it has experienced. Staff changes can be managed more smoothly when newcomers have this archive for review.

Given the many significant advantages, this investment of about an hour a week seems like an extremely good idea and well worth the commitment involved.